RAGE

FOR THE HARD HEADED

महायोद्धा भोकाल

प्रलयंकारी योद्धा

तिलिस्मदेव और चांडाल चौकड़ी

हत्यारा शुक्राल

गोल्ड हार्ट

प्रचंडा

रोबोकॉर्ट

शेषनाग की प्रलय

खूनी आत्मा

परोपकारी राक्षस

पागल हत्यारा

मुकद्दर का धनी

बांकेलाल और शादी का षड्यंत्र

पारस पत्थर

तरंगी संगीत

नागराज का दुश्मन

खून की बारिश

आदमखोर हत्यारा

हत्यारी गेंद

काली मौत

खूनी दर्रा

नागराज और जादूगर शाकूरा

ये है डोगा

तिलिस्मदेव और विकराल

बिजलिका गौंजो

मे हूं डोगा

इच्छाधारी हत्यारा

शुक्राल और शाल्का

अंधायुद्ध

अश्वखोर

नानाशाह गौंजो

एक और परमाणु

बाज

नागराज खूनी यात्रा

ग्लफांदी

अपाहिज गुण्डे

मौत का सफर

जासूस टोपीचंद और पैट्रोल की खोती

लहराता रहेगा तिरंगा

मैटलमैन

बांकेलाल का कमाल

कर बुरा हो भला

RAJ COMICS FOR THE HARD HEADED
BY
AMITABH KUMAR
(FROM SARAI MEDIA LAB'S RESEARCH PROJECT ON RAJ COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVEL CULTURE IN DELHI)

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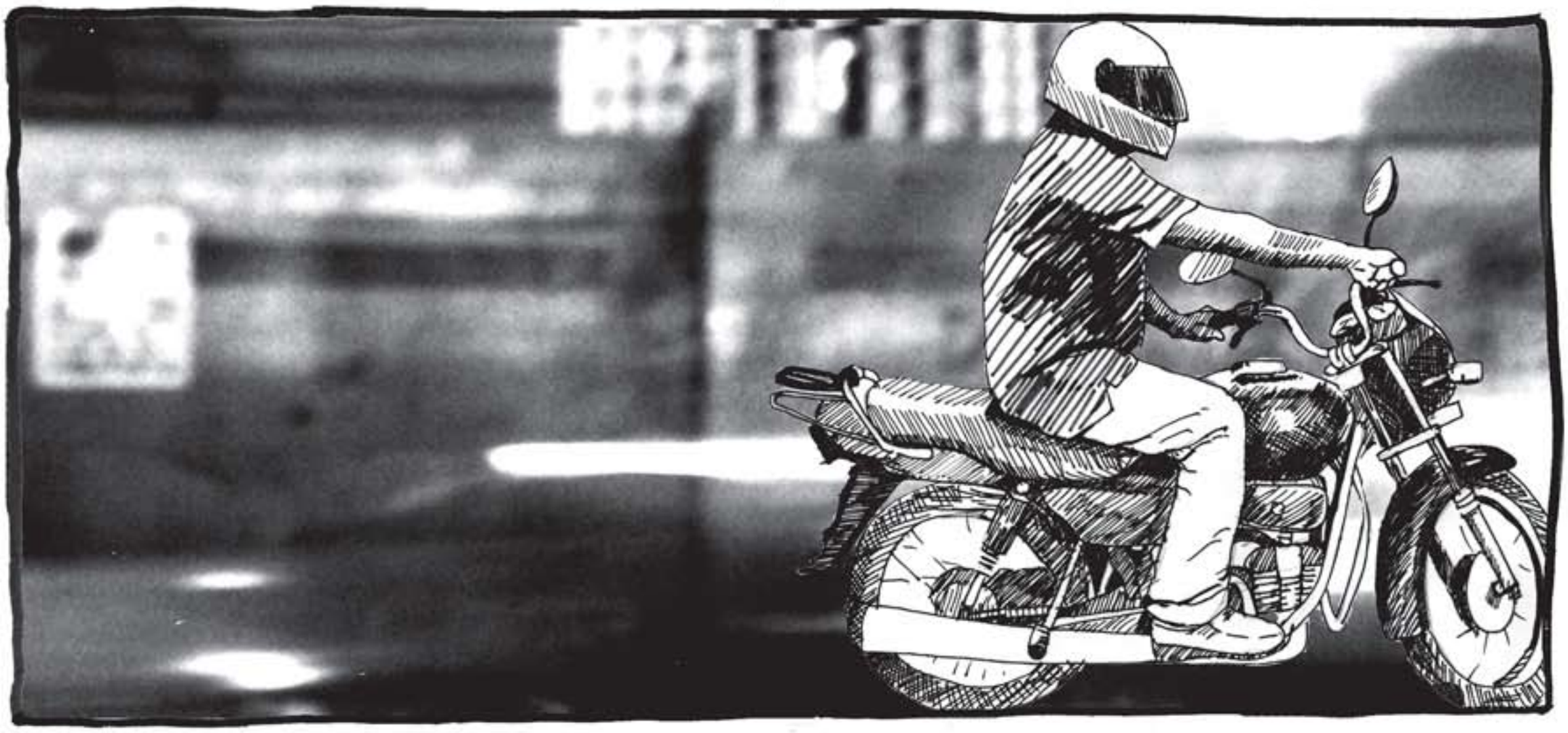
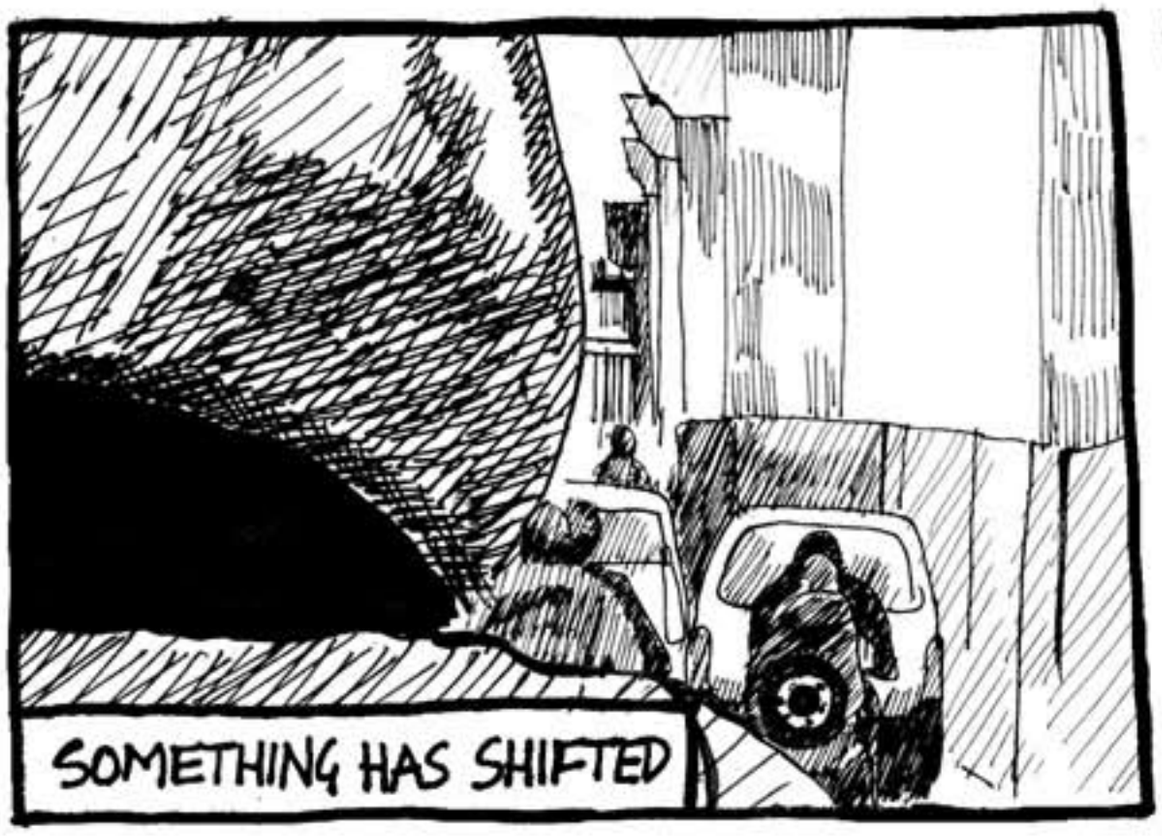
I STOP..

...WAIT..

...LINGER



BETWEEN THE TIME I SHUTTLED FROM THE OUTSIDE TO THE INSIDE AND BACK..



SOMETHING HAS SHIFTED

BEEN CLEANLY PICKED UP AND **REPLACED.**

BY SOMETHING THAT LOOKS AND SMELLS THE SAME..

..SOUNDS THE SAME..

BUT DOESN'T **FEEL** THE SAME.

AS I MOVE ON, THE SENSE OF THE, **FAMILIAR STRANGENESS** BEGINS TO DEEPEN.

I TRY TO LOOK FOR CLUES TO THE SHIFT.

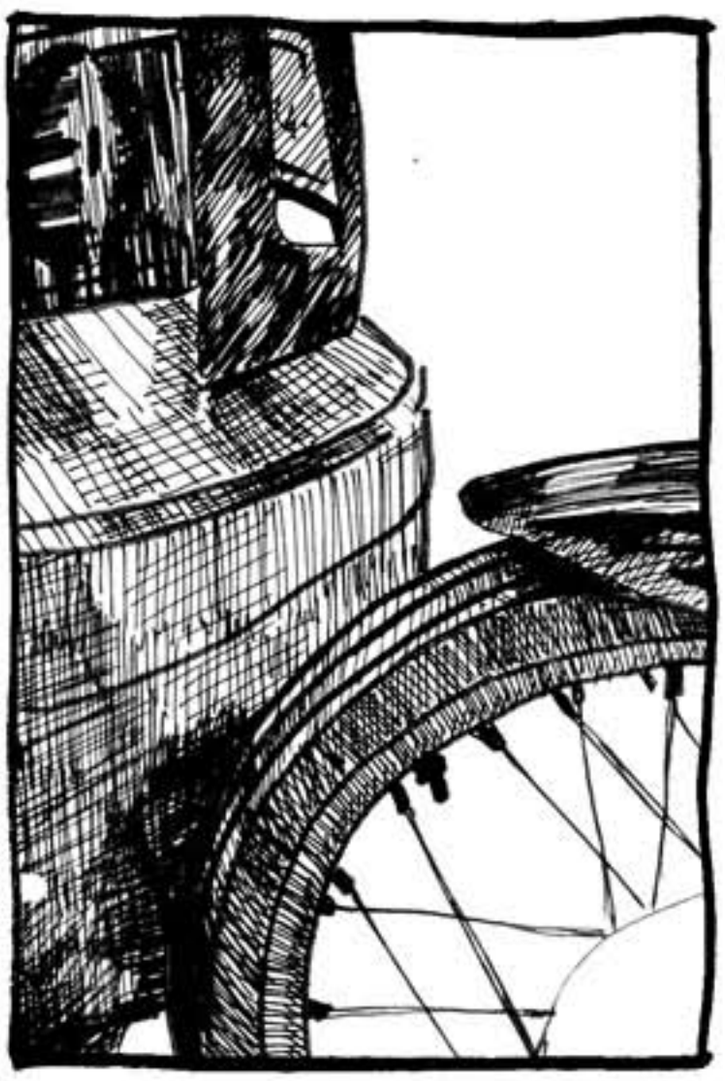
A PROOF.

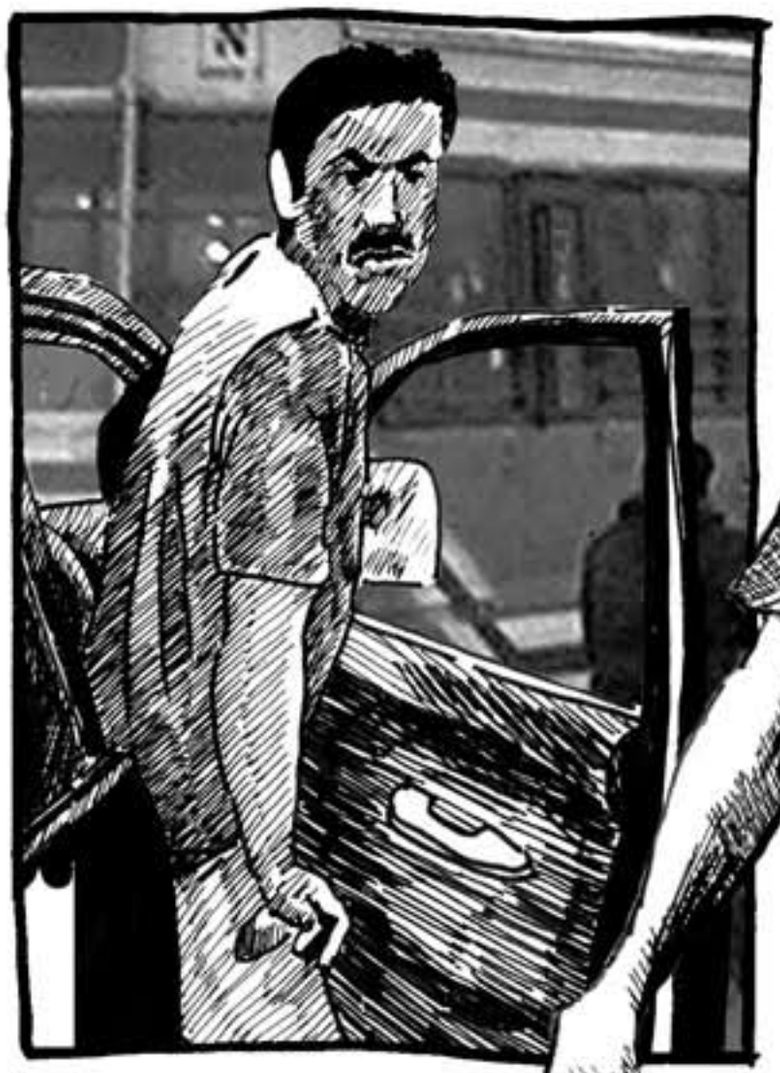
A HINT.

AND SUDDENLY..

A WORLD FULL OF PROOFS

..WARNINGS..





AND THREATS

THE BLAND REALITY OF THE SITUATION HITS ME WITH FULL FORCE.

I STUMBLE BACK.

BUT..

I WAS THERE BECAUSE I KNEW SOMETHING. WHAT I KNEW I COULDN'T EXPLAIN.

BUT I FELT IT..

THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE WORLD...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS ...

... BUT IT WAS THERE LIKE A **SPLINTER** IN MY MIND.

SOMEONE HAD TO **STOP** IT..

SOMEONE?

I TURNED AROUND AND SAW ONLY MYSELF..

AND THE BLUR OF..

..SHADOW'S THAT..

..SURROUNDED ME..

A VOICE INSIDE ME

, OR MAYBE OUTSIDE SPOKE

"FACE IT...IN OUR OWN WAYS, AND AT OUR OWN TIME..."

"WE DESIRE TO **SAVE**, TO **PROTECT**, TO SEEK **JUSTICE**.

TO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN DO ALL THAT AND MORE."

WAITING FOR OUR TIME. WHEN WE WILL BE CALLED UPON TO FIX IT...

...YOUR TIME HAS COME!!! FOLLOW ME

I AM NAGRAJ.. AND WE ARE STANDING ON THE GATES TO MY WORLD!!

WHO ARE YOU...? WHERE ARE WE GOING??

WHAT.. IS THAT ..??

WAIT!!!

EXIT

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF RAJ COMICS

BUT WHAT IS THIS WORLD? WHERE ARE WE?

THIS IS THE SUPERHEROES WORLD. THE WORLD WHERE **JUSTICE** PREVAILS., **MY JUSTICE**

WE ARE IN **MAHANAGAR** EVERY-CITY.. OR ANY-CITY.. OR A-CITY

HUH..??

THIS CITY IS A **LIVING ORGANISM**- WITH PEOPLE **STACKED** INSIDE.EACH HAS A FUNCTION ,THAT PLAYS ITSELF OUT IN AN EVERYDAY ROUTINE. LIKE **COGS IN A LARGER MACHINE**, THAT OFFERS **ORDER** IN EXCHANGE FOR **CONFORMITY** TO A **COMMON LAW**. ...THIS SYSTEM, LIKE ANY, HAS **CRACKS**. AND SOMETIMES THESE CRACKS TRY AND **TEAR APART**.. THE THREAT ENTERS THE CITY THROUGH THESE CRACKS.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THIS CITY HAS ITS FOUNDATIONS IN THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN ITS **STILLNESS** AND ITS MOMENTS OF **CHAOS**.

THE POINTS WHERE I ENTER THE LIVES OF THE **ORDINARY** ARE BETWEEN THESE CRITICAL MOMENTS.

THE SUPERHEROES MOMENTS!!

THIS CITY IS A **MICROCOSM** OF THE **WORLD**. THE NATION, AND THE **STATE**- AND WHEN I RESCUE IT, I AM ACTUALLY RESCUING **ALL OF YOU** AND **EVERYTHING** YOU STAND FOR.. THIS IS MY FUNCTION. IN CONTRAST TO THE **SUPER-VILLIAN** MY **AWESOME POWER** IS BALANCED BY AN ENDLESS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PEOPLE. THIS IS THE LINE THAT SEPARATES ME FROM THE VILLIANS.

IT'S AN AREA TO OPERATE IIN.... **MAHANAGAR** FOR ME. WE NEED A SIMILAR SPACE FOR EVERY SUPERHERO. LIKE **DELHI** FOR PARMANU OR **MUMBAI** FOR DOGA..

THIS IS MY CITY!! IT GETS **BUILT AND REBUILT** WITH EVERY ADVENTURE I HAVE. LIKE A **LIVING BEING**, IT CHANGES ITSELF WITH EVERY MOVE THAT I MAKE.

AND **WHY** IS THIS CITY HERE? I MEAN...

BUT EVERYTHING LOOKS THE SAME. IT'S JUST ONE PATTERN REPEATING ITSELF.

IT HAS TO REMAN THE SAME. ONE CITY..

THIS WORLD IS THE WORLD OF THE **SUPERHEROES** AND THE CITY IS JUST IT'S SITE ..

INJUSTICE N A CITY, YOU SEE, IS NEVER LOCALISED, IT SPREADS AND ATTACKS NOT JUST PEOPLE, BUT THEIR FUNCTIONS- FILLING THE ORGANISM WITH A CANCER. SO MUCH SO THAT THE **LIFE OF THE CITY** IS PLOTTED BY THESE EVENTS. AND THIS IS THE CITY THAT I SEE.

NOT A CITY MADE UP OF LOCALITIES..

BUT OF EVENTS.

I SOLVE CRIMES EVRYWHERE IN THE ENTIRE METRO. AND NEED TO BE **PHYSICALLY UNBOUND.** THIS CITY IS NOT PLOTTED BY ITS GEOGRAPHY BUT BY MY **ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE** AND ITS **IMPLICATIONS.**

AND WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITY? ARE THEY ALL THE SAME AS WELL

I LOOK AT THE DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE THROUGH **NEWTON'S SECOND LAW OF MOTION.**

I DON'T THINK ANYONE WILL HAVE ANY **DIFFICULTY IN ADAPTING** TO CHANGE..THERE WILL BE SOME **RESISTANCE** AT FIRST, BUT THEN THEY WILL QUICKLY ADAPT TO IT. AND FROM THAT POINT IT WILL BECOME A **WAY OF LIFE .**

IT IS THE SAME N **MAHANAGAR.** YOU WOULD SAY THIS,THAT AND THE OTHER IS BAD. BUT WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE YOU **ADAPT** TO IT.

I THINK SOCIETY AS A WHOLE IS NEVER WRONG.

SOCIETY AS A WHOLE?

YES.

LIKE THE CITY THEY INHABIT. **SOCIETY HAS A VERY SIMPLE ROLE TO PLAY,**

IT IS FROM **IT** THAT I ARISE

IT IS BY THEIR **APPROVAL** THAT WE EXIST.

WE ARE THEIR SUPERHEROES. WE **DEFEND AND PROTECT** SOCIETY. WE ARE PART OF THEIR **UNIFIED DESIRE** AND SO FOR US, THEY ARE **A SINGLE UNIT** FOR WHOSE SAFETY AND PROTECTION WE EXIST.

THEY ARE **THE COMMON, THE NORMAL.** AND HAVE **NO IDENTITY. NO PERSONALITY.**JUST AN **EXISTENCE.** I EXIST BECAUSE THE THEY HAVE **LIMITATIONS OF A FAMILY** AND PEOPLE WHO **LOVE** THEM. LIMITATIONS OF A SOCIETY WHOSE **RULES THEY CANNOT BREAK** AND OF A **STRUCTURE** THAT THEIR LIFE HAS TAKEN AND THEN THE OBVIOUS **PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS.**

THESE LIMITATIONS MAKE THEM A **TARGET.. A VICTIM.**.THEY ARE **BOTH A** CONTEXT FROM WHICH WE ARISE AND THE **VICTIM** WHOM WE PROTECT FROM **THE THREAT**

THE RAJ UNIVERSE

NAGRAJ

He was the first Raj Comics superhero and was originally conceived as an enemy of international terrorism.Later stories said that his powers came from his 'divine' origin i.e. his parents were rulers of a kingdom in a bygone era and had conceived Nagraj by the blessings of Lord Kaljayi (Kaljayi is the serpent on Shiva's neck)

Powers

Based largely on the myth of the shape shifting snakes, Nagraj derives most of his powers from microscopic snakes that live in his bloodstream (in lieu of white blood cells) and has a number of powers like superhuman strength, poisonous breath/bite, instant healing powers and snakes that come out of his wrists separately or make interesting shapes like ropes, parachutes and others, depending on their need.Nagraj resides in a town called Mahanagar and operates from there. He also lives in a hidden island called Nagdweep , which is peopled with shape shifting snakes.

Alter- ego

His alter ego is called Raj who works as a Public Relations officer in a media firm.

SHAKTI

Shakti is an incarnation of the Goddess Kali and is a manifestation of her divine energy. Her mission on earth is to defend women in a world dominated by men.If any woman cries out in distress, it is heard by Shakti, who comes to their rescue.

Shakti is esentially an energy that resides in the body of her alter ego. Her power's find their source in the muted rage of the women who are being vicitmised.

Alter Ego: Chanda
(Works as a receptionistin AIIMS Hospital, New Delhi)

TIRANGA

As the name suggests,Tiranga (Tricolour), is obsessed with patriotism. The national emblem,tricolor, the country's name and its soil are sacred to him. Any threat to Delhi or the nationthe nation is answered by him.

Terrorists and traitors who threaten the nation's ,safety unity and integrity are his prime targets. Criminals who give a bad name to India earn his wrath.

He keeps an eye on the national capital to make sure that no threat looms large on it and teaches a lesson to all who dare to.

BHERIYA

More than fifty thousand years ago in a kingdom called Wolfano, lived a powerful and highly evolved breed of wolfmen who walked on two feet. Their king took a fancy to a human princess and tricked her into marrying him.They have a son called Kobi. The princess eventually sees through the trick and leaves them to marry another king. When Kobi grows up and finds out about his mother, he tries to get her back. But in a fit of rage she curses him and Kobi turns into a golden statue.

Fifty thousand years later the curse is lifted and Kobi finds himself in the jungles of Assam. He starts his new life with the name "Bheriya".

Bheriya protects his forest and the natives worship him as their Saviour.

Powers

Bheriya is blessed with many divine and supernatural powers.

PARMANU

After a horrific incident that killed his parents and his best friend ,Vinay is rescued by his maternal uncle Prof.K.K. and is taken to his lab where he hands Vinay a dress that gives him many supernatural powers.

With his new found role as a Superhero, Vinay takes a vow to rid Delhi of its criminals.

Powers

This guardian of the capital has the ability to fly and destroys his enemies with atomic bolts fired from his chest and bracelets. He can reel out an atomic rope from his wrist band. His belt has many gadgets that help him teleport, atomize and reduce himself to any desired size.

Alter Ego

Parmanu's alter ego is Inspector Vinay.

DOGA

A dacoit finds Suraj lying in a garbage dump and decides to keep him. A few years later Suraj manages to escape the dacoit ,but while doing so his best friend gets killed. Suraj swears revenge and runs away to Mumbai.

As time goes by, he becomes proficient in hand to hand combat and handling all kinds of weapons under the watchful eyes of Adrak Chacha, the head instructor of Lions Gym, and his brothers.

Suraj is forced to become Doga when there is a near fatal on Adrak Chacha's life. Subsequently, all the cruelty that he has seen in his childhood comes to the fore when he dons the mask and turns into the brutal vigilante of Mumbai.

Powers

He is proficient in all the martial arts as well as with automatic guns and bombs. Dogs are his back up army.

Alter Ego

Suraj (Works as a body builder and a gym instructor)

There are over 20 characters in the Raj Comics line up. For a list of all, visit: www.rajcomics.com

SUPER COMMANDO DHRUV

After losing his parents in a circus fire in childhood ,Dhruv is adopted by the Police Commissioner and subsequently turns to crime fighting.Dhruv in Sanskrit means 'North Star',a star that mantains its position and is a guiding light for others. He understands the language of animals and birds, and they help him from time to time by reporting crimes happening in Raj Nagar, the fictional city where he lives with his foster family. Dhruv has also taken a vow never to kill or use firearms.

Powers

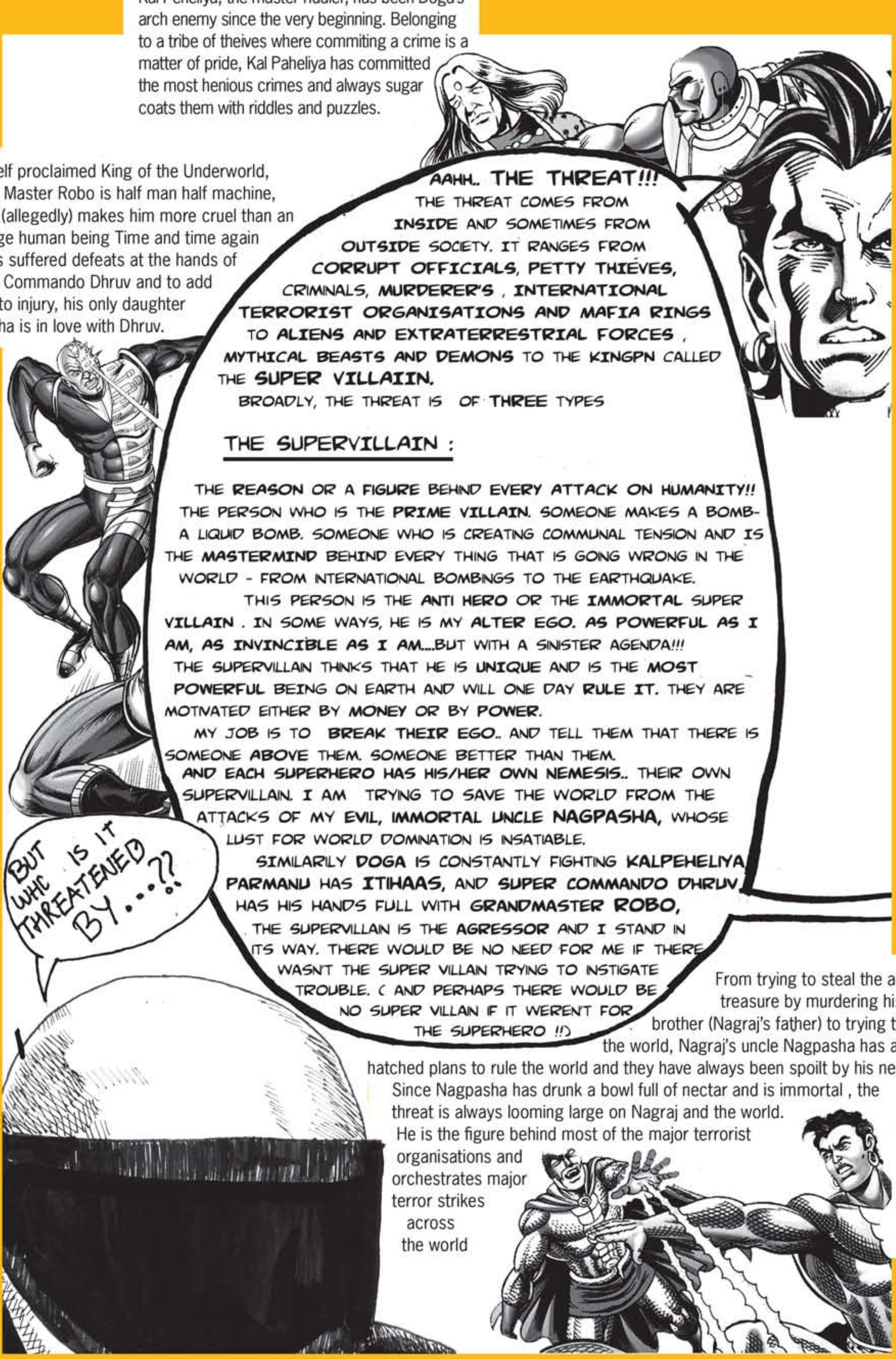
His only supernatural power is the ability to talk to animals and birds.He is trained in hand-to-hand combat, and excels in all the major martial arts. He is a perfect marksman too. He also has the ability to breathe under water. Apart from his 'Star Transmitter'(to contact his headquarters),he now has, boots that become skates with a little movement of his toe , 'Star Line' a metallic rope that is kept in his bracelets, along with the 'Star-Blades'.

Dhruv is also the founder and head of "Commando Force" a team that helps him fight crime in Rajnagar.He often teams up with Nagraj when the world is under threat.

Unlike many super heroes he does not use a disguise or have an alterego.

Kal Peheliya, the master riddler, has been Doga's arch enemy since the very beginning. Belonging to a tribe of theives where commiting a crime is a matter of pride, Kal Paheliya has committed the most henious crimes and always sugar coats them with riddles and puzzles.

The self proclaimed King of the Underworld, Grand Master Robo is half man half machine, which (allegedly) makes him more cruel than an average human being Time and time again he has suffered defeats at the hands of Super Commando Dhruv and to add insult to injury, his only daughter Natasha is in love with Dhruv.



From trying to steal the ancient treasure by murdering his own brother (Nagraj's father) to trying to rule the world, Nagraj's uncle Nagpasha has always hatched plans to rule the world and they have always been spoilt by his nephew.

Since Nagpasha has drunk a bowl full of nectar and is immortal , the threat is always looming large on Nagraj and the world.

He is the figure behind most of the major terrorist organisations and orchestrates major terror strikes across the world

THE TERRORIST:

THE **TERRORIST** IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE ORDINARY CRIMINALS AND IS POTENTIALLY **THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY** OF THE SUPERHERO. THEIR'S IS AN **OBSESSION** OR **MADNESS** REGARDING **RACE, CREED OR RELIGION.** THE TERRORISTS LINK THEIR **IDENTITY** TO THEIR **RELIGION** AND WHEN THEY SEE THEIR **RELIGION CRUMBLING** THEIR IDENTITY IS AUTOMATICALLY UNDER **THREAT.** THEY REACT TO THIS THREAT BY **PROMOTING** THEIR OWN RELIGION.. AND NOT SEEING WHAT **HARM THE PROCESS** MIGHT CAUSE SOMEONE ELSE..

REMEMBER, ANYONE CAN BE A TERRORIST.

THEIR USUAL MODE OF OPERATION IS THE **USE OF FORCE** TO LET THEIR POINT PREVAIL. AND THEN **BRAINWASH** OTHERS INTO FOLLOWING THEM

THE CRIMINAL:

CRIME CAN BE SEEN AS A **BUSINESS** THAT THE **GOVERNMENT/LAW DOESN'T SUPPORT OR RECOGNIZE**AND LIKE ANY FORM OF BUSINESS IT IS AN ACCEPTED PRACTICE BY A CERTAIN SECTION OF PEOPLE AND NOT ACCEPTED BY THE OTHER.

SINCE THESE PRACTICES ARE **CONTRARY TO THE LAW AND THE SOCIAL RULE'S** , THEY ARE CALLED CRIMES AND PEOPLE COMMITTING THESE CRIMES ARE CALLED **CRIMINALS.**

THEY ARE MOST OFTEN USED EITHER BY THE **TERRORISTS OR THE SUPER VILLAINS** TO SPREAD THEIR NETWORKS IN THE CITY.

But thats not all.. tell him the entire thing !!!

WHO SAID THAT ??!!!!

DOGA!!!

WELL... THIS IS DOGA.. ONE OF OUR FIRST SUPER HEROES.. AND ..DOGA..THIS IS...

I know.. I know you ..WE'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU FOR A WHILE NOW

They say it's your time Now. .HA!! .. but then again.. only you know when that is.. and we'll alll be waiting to find out. ..ANYWAY...

Papi

..Nagraj didn't mention something. This **superhero business** isn't as simple as he makes it sound. For instance .. If the threat is **supernatural** then they need my help – If it's not then there is this thing called **JURISDICTION!!!** But we will talk about that later. Now, there are various types of crimes. There are a few **high intensity** crimes and then there are the **low intensity** crimes... and so we distribute the crimes amongst the super heroes according to their powers Basically ,the Superhero deals with either crimes that **threaten the world** or **threaten an individual**. We Either **SAVE THE WORLD**, or **STOP A CRIME**. Some crimes are meant for someone like me and others for Nagraj. If there are crimes **within society** they come to me. Like the **Nithari** Killings is something that only **I** could investigate.

Papi

There is no space for Nagraj. I mean, He will punch a few goons and then throw the culprit into the prison. Nagraj is **not supposed to work on a smaller scale and unearth the entire episode.** There are **BIGGER** crimes for him. I basically deal with crimes that take place **within the fold of the society**, which are **low intensity** crimes.If there is an **international crisis, an alien invasion, a major plot of terrorism or a demon reborn,** then Nagraj would come into the fold. **Other superheroes in the Raj Universe are also spread accordingly.**

SOMEWHERE THE COMMON MAN, BECAUSE OF HIS **LIMITATIONS** CANNOT PROTECT HIMSELF AGAINST THE VILLAINS. SO , WHEN HE SEE'S NAGRAJ OR ME DO **WHAT HE WANTED TO DO WITH THE CRIMINALS**.. WE AUTOMATICALLY TURN INTO A... SUPERHER_

STOP THESE LIES YOU HYPOCRITE!!

What give's you this moral high ground ?

WHO GIVE'S YOU THIS SANCTION??

The LAW??!

You say that I am the villain who wants to control the world.. What are you doing ??

If you are suspicious of my motives, .. I am suspicious of yours too.. What you are doing is also illegal. Even you don't have the sanction of the law and the authorities!!

Tell me .. are you an AUTHORISED SUPERHERO?

HA.. THE LAW OF THE PEOPLE..!!

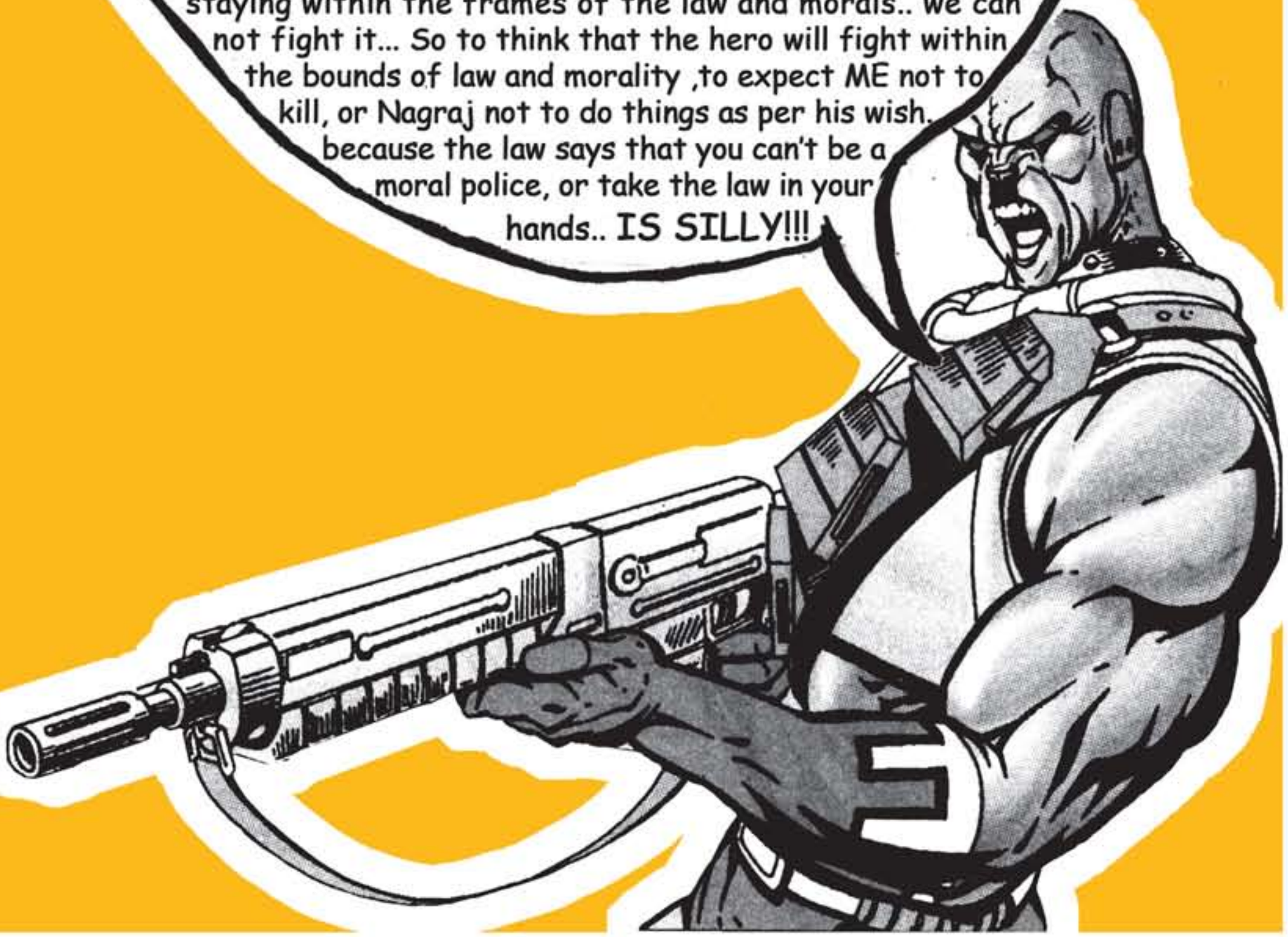
The only **difference** between the hero and villain is that the hero has got the **SANCTION** of the **COMMON MAN**. To operate as a parallel government. In the form of his alter ego,the superhero lives with the people and they know it.

They know that **ANYONE** could be a superhero.. and that he or she will come when they are in danger. See, our main job is to give people justice..and give it quick. And we have to go against the law because the **LAW ITSELF IS IMPOTENT** and the ways aren't efficient. That's why the superhero has to operate slightly differently.

WE GIVE THEM OUR OWN BRAND OF JUSTICE..

It's a **dirty war** and the government supports it because they profit from it. The encounters that the police do is a dirty war, and the common man is with the cops,because they are doing this job for them. They are helping them. The encounter specialist is also a **hero** for them.Till something doesn't happen to them.. or they don't find themselves on the receiving ends of their guns, they are your heroes. **YOUR PROTECTORS**. Killing for **YOU**.If tomorrow Nagraj or I start taking down innocent people, then we will fall from our pedestals.

The truth of the matter is that..things have gone from bad to worse. Society is so badly infected,that by staying within the frames of the law and morals.. we can not fight it... So to think that the hero will fight within the bounds of law and morality ,to expect ME not to kill, or Nagraj not to do things as per his wish. because the law says that you can't be a moral police, or take the law in your hands.. IS SILLY!!!



I LOOK AT THE SUPERHERO NOW, AND WONDER IF THIS WAS MY MALADY.

WONDER

IF THIS WAS MY CALLING

AS IF READING MY THOUGHTS,... THE SUPERHERO SAID,

So ..?
Are you THE ONE..??
One of us..?

No...

I MEAN

I

DON'T KNOW..

I WOULD LIKE TO GO HOME IT'S BEEN A WHILE SO..

HA.

AND I FOUND MYSELF IN THE SAME SPOT WHERE THE ACCIDENT HAD HAPPENED

AND ALL ALONG... ALL ALONG I KNEW THE ANSWER I WOULD'VE GIVEN HIM.

THAT I WASN'T THE ONE ..... I WAS JUST ANOTHER GUY.

TO BE CONTINUED...

FIND OUT HOW THE RAJ COMIC SUPERHERO WILL MEET HIS TRAGIC END. WHY WILL HE DIE ? WHO WILL KILL HIM ? AND HOW ??

COMING SOON !!

THE SUPERHERO HAS EXISTED FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO BECAUSE NO ONE WANTS TO TAKE THE INITIAL RISK!

"WHO WILL DO IT FIRST?" IS THE QUESTION.

THERE ARE MANY NICHE SEGMENTS AND THE PERSON WHO STRIKES FIRST WILL GET THEM. EVERYONE WANTS TO SEE WHO IS GOING TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.
I AM READY TO TAKE A FEW RISKS....

CALCULATED RISKS

AFTER 25 YEARS OF PRODUCING A GALAXY OF SUPERHEROES, RAJ COMICS IS THE SINGLE LARGEST COMIC BOOK PUBLICATION HOUSE IN INDIA TODAY. THEY HAVE PUBLISHED MORE THAN 5000 TITLES AND HAVE MORE THAN TWENTY CHARACTERS IN THEIR REPERTOIRE.

BUT WHAT WAS THE SCENARIO WHEN THEY WERE JUST STARTING OUT? WHAT WAS THE COMIC BOOK CULTURE THAT RAJ COMICS INHERITED AND WHAT WAS THEIR INTERVENTION IN IT?

A SEARCH FOR THE ANSWER LEADS US TO A LONE FIGURE, CREDITED WITH BRINGING 'COMICS' TO INDIA AND MAKING IT AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE POPULAR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE - ANANT PAI . WITH A HEAD FULL OF IDEAS AND A HEART THUMPING WITH PATRIOTISM (NOT UNFAMILIAR WITH THE YOUTH OF THE 1960s), PAI BEGAN TO CHARTER A TERRITORY WITH A FORM THAT WAS PREVIOUSLY UNRECOGNISED IN INDIA. HIS EFFORTS YIELDED THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PHANTOM COMIC STRIPS IN THE TIMES OF INDIA, ONE OF INDIAS LARGEST CIRCULATING NEWSPAPERS , AND SUBSEQUENTLY CULMINATED IN A COMIC BOOK PUBLICATION WITH IBH (INDIAN BOOK HOUSE) CALLED AMAR CHITRA KATHA.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA, COMIC BOOK NARRATIVES ABOUT INDIAN MYTHS AND FOLKLORE, MET WITH STUPENDOUS SUCCESS AND IS NOW A CULT PHENOMENON OF SORTS, WITH AS MANY AS FOUR GENERATIONS (INCLUDING MINE) GROWING UP ON IT. WITH THE RISK PAYING OFF, THE TIMES OF INDIA GROUP (WHO WERE PAI'S FORMER EMPLOYER'S AND HAD REJECTED HIS PROPOSAL TO LAUNCH THE AMAR CHITRA KATHA SERIES) THEN LAUNCHED A COMIC BOOK SERIES OF THEIR OWN- INDRAJAAL COMICS. INDRAJAAL IS CREDITED WITH BRINGING AN ENTIRE GALAXY OF 'FOREIGN' COMIC CHARACTERS TO INDIA. CHARACTERS LIKE FLASH GORDON, PHANTOM, AND MANDRAKE CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF READERS. THIS COULD ALSO BE CREDITED TO THE MULTILINGUAL APPROACH ADOPTED BY THE PUBLISHING HOUSE (PROBABLY A LESSON LEARNT FROM AMAR CHITRA KATHAS POPULARITY, WHICH HAD VERSIONS IN 38 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES). WITH THE ADVENT OF THESE FOREIGN SUPERHEROES IN INDIA IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE INDIAN COMIC BOOK CREATOR'S WENT OUT LOOKING FOR ONE OF THEIR OWN TO DON THE MANTLE. THE RESULT WAS BAHADUR, A VIGILANTE IN THE TRADITION OF PHANTOM AND MANDRAKE WHO HELPED THE POLICE SOLVE CRIMES. HE WAS TALL, HAS A MOUSTACHE AND WORE A DENIM PANTS WITH A SAFFRON KURTA.

AT THAT TIME, THE ONLY MATERIAL FOR THE POTENTIAL CREATOR TO BUILD HIS UNDERSTANDING ABOUT COMICS WERE THE AFOREMENTIONED TITLES. ADD TO THAT A DASH OF 'COMMANDO' COMICS AND A SPRINKLING OF ARCHIES. D.C AND MARVEL COMICS WERE REALLY NOT EASILY AVAILABLE AND TIN TIN AND ASTERIX WERE A NOVELTY USUALLY RESERVED FOR BIRTHDAY PRESENTS OR 'PRIZES'. THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION WERE LIMITED TO AMAR CHITRA KATHA AND INDRAJAAL COMICS. FOR THE DEVELOPING CRITICAL MASS OF COMIC BOOK AFICIONADOS, READERS AND FANS MOST OF THE UNDERSTANDING AND CRITICISM OF THE FORM WAS BASED ON THE AVAILABILITY OF THESE.

SANJAY, MANISH AND MANOJ GUPTA WERE THREE SUCH INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN BITTEN BY THE 'COMIC BUG' AND COULD NOT GET ENOUGH OF THE READING MATERIAL. AS SANJAY PUTS IT "WE WERE PASSIONATELY IN LOVE WITH COMICS AND WITH FANTASY COMICS IN PARTICULAR. SO MY BROTHER, MANOJ, AND I WOULD READ AMAR CHITRA KATHA AND THE OTHER COMICS THAT WAS AROUND AT THAT POINT OF TIME. WHAT HAPPENS IS THAT ONCE SOMETHING FASCINATES YOU, YOU BEGIN HUNTING FOR IT. WE HAD READ ALL THE AMAR CHITRA KATHAS AND THEN WENT TO INDRAJAAL COMIC TITLES LIKE BAHADUR. BUT EVEN THAT COULDN'T QUENCH OUR THIRST FOR COMICS." THEIR FATHER OPENED A PUBLISHING HOUSE CALLED RAJA POCKET BOOKS IN 1982-83, AND SOON ENOUGH THE THREE BROTHERS DECIDED TO PURSUE THEIR PASSION FOR COMICS BY BECOMING COMIC BOOK CREATORS FROM COMIC BOOK READERS., "SO WE READ AND READ AND READ... AND ONE DAY WE FELT THAT WE SHOULD MAKE COMICS. INDRAJAAL WOULD MAINLY HAVE CHARACTERS THAT WEREN'T MADE IN INDIA... LIKE PHANTOM ETC. WE THOUGHT THAT WE NEEDED TO CREATE A SPECIAL CHARACTER FROM AND OF INDIA." SAYS SANJAY. THIS LED TO THE CREATION OF RAJ COMICS.

FOR THESE NEW CREATORS OF COMICS IN INDIA, SUPERHERO AND COMICS WERE SYNONYMOUS WITH EACH OTHER. THE THREE WANTED TO CREATE A UNIQUELY INDIAN SUPERHERO INFLUENCED BY THE INDRAJAAL SUPERHEROES. BUT INSPIRATION CAME IN THE FORM OF SPIDERMAN THAT WAS AIRED ON THE NATIONAL TELEVISION ON SUNDAY'S. THEY DECIDED TO CREATE AN INDIAN SPIDERMAN.

THE MID EIGHTIES WERE ALSO A TUMULTUOUS TIME IN INDIA. THE THEN PRIME MINISTER, INDIRA GANDHI, HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED, THERE WAS TROUBLE IN PUNJAB, THERE WERE THE RIOTS IN DELHI, AND THE KASHMIR ISSUE WAS JUST REARING ITS UGLY HEAD. THE STAGE WAS SET FOR A SAVIOUR - A SUPER HERO WHO WOULD RID THE WORLD OF CRIME, CORRUPTION AND THE NEWLY FORMED WORD IN THE INDIAN PSYCHE- TERRORISM.

AND SO NAGRAJ WAS BORN.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND IMAGE CREDITS

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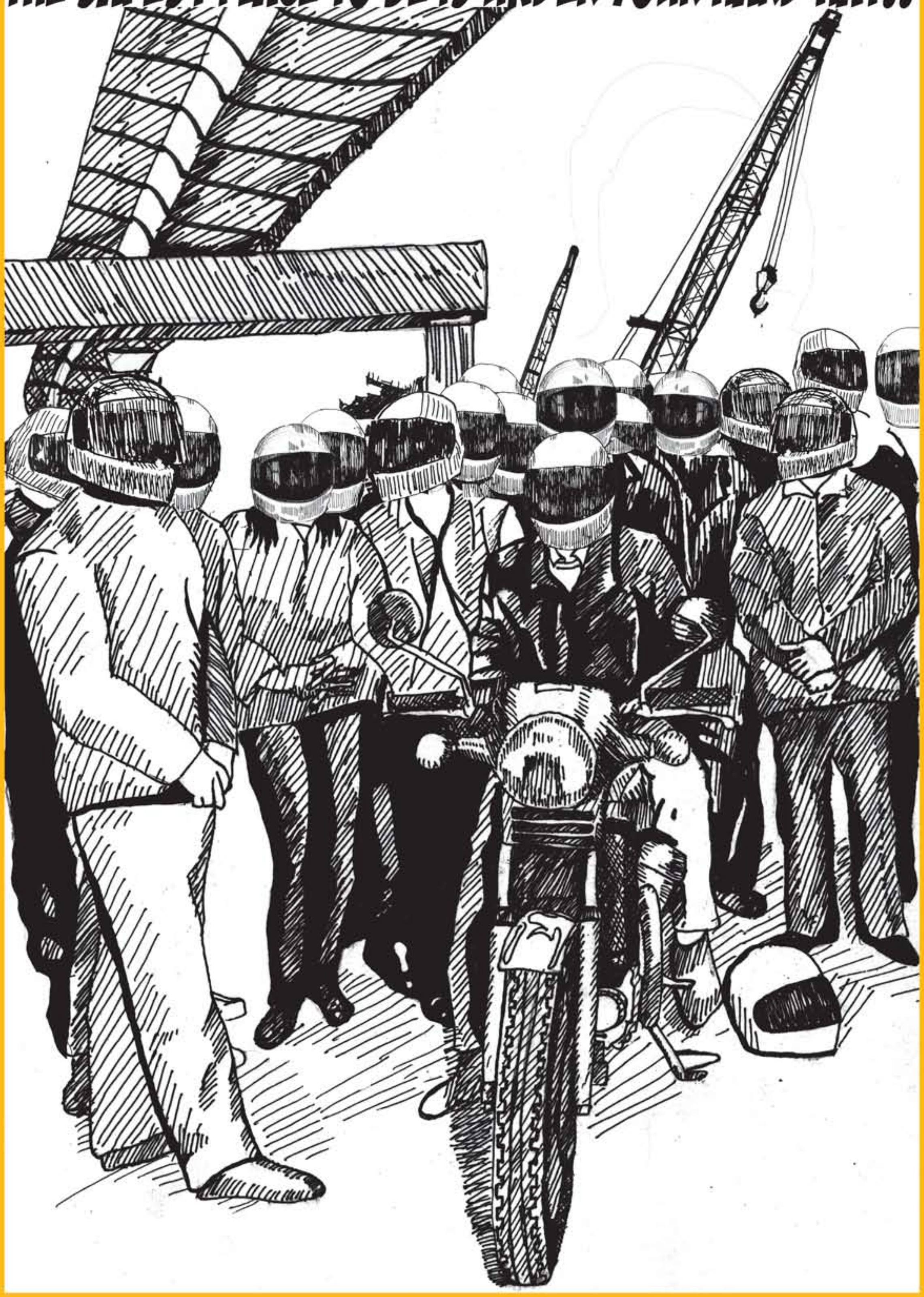
THE SAFEST PLACE TO BE IS UNDER YOUR HARD HAT!!



आदमखोरों का स्वर्ग
सुपरकमांडो ध्रुव
भोकाल बनेगा राजा
भोकाल
जहर
नागराज
एक दिन की मौत
सुपरकमांडो ध्रुव
सवा लाख से एक लड़ाऊं
ग्रैंडमास्टर रोबो
जहर
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खतरनाक खेल
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खूनी खिलौने
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लुटेरी चिंगारियां
गगन
नागपाशा
नागराज
नागराज का अंत
नागराज का बदला
नागराज और जादू का शहंशाह
नागराज और थोडांगा
नागराज
प्रलयंकारी नागराज
प्रतिशोध की ज्वाला
सुपरकमांडो ध्रुव
रोमन हत्यारा
सुपरकमांडो ध्रुव
शाकूरा का चक्रव्यूह
नागराज
स्नेकपार्क
नागराज
स्वर्ग की तबाही
सुपरकमांडो ध्रुव
विनाश के वृक्ष
सुपरकमांडो ध्रुव
जिंदा मनोरंजन
गमराज
महाबला शक्ति
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एंथेनी सीरीज
मेरी अदालत
तिरंगा
चीख उठा कब्रिस्तान
एंथोनी
छलावा
प्रदूषणभाई
मुर्दे का कानून
एंथोनी
स्केलस्वत्म
प्रोफेसर भूत
इंस्पेक्टर स्टील

AROUND THE LATE 1980s, WHEN INDRAJAAL COMICS WAS BEGINNING TO CLOSE SHOP AND AMAR CHITRA KATHA WAS PRINTING RE-RUNS, THREE BROTHERS DECIDED TO OPEN THEIR OWN COMIC BOOK PUBLICATION HOUSE. IN THEIR QUEST FOR THE INDIAN SUPER HERO, RAJ COMICS WAS BORN.

AFTER 25 YEARS OF PRODUCING AN ENTIRE GALAXY OF SUPERHEROES, RAJ COMICS IS THE LARGEST COMIC BOOK PUBLISHING HOUSE IN INDIA. THEY HAVE PUBLISHED MORE THAN 5000 TITLES AND ARE HOME TO MORE THAN 20 CHARACTERS.

BUT, WHAT IS THE WORLD OF RAJ COMICS ? WHO IS THE RAJ COMIC SUPERHERO ? WHERE DOES HE OPERATE ? WHO DOES HE PROTECT ? AND WHAT DOES HE PROTECT IT FROM ? WHAT ROLE DOES THE TRINITY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND AUTHORITY HAVE TO PLAY IN THESE COMICS ?

SURROUNDED BY ALL THESE QUESTIONS, A MAN RIDES IN THE CITY, CERTAIN THAT SOMETHING HAS GONE HORRIBLY WRONG AND NEEDS TO BE SAVED. CERTAIN THAT THIS TIME IT IS HIS TURN TO BE THE SAVIOUR.

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